

# Being great <sup>108</sup> takes work from us all

A group of area residents and officials want to nominate the North Corridor as a "great place."

The group believes the state should designate the area including Iowa City, Cedar Rapids and everything between as one of the three Iowa Great Places pilot program areas.

What could make more sense? There's no doubt this area is a great place. And gaining the state designation would mean additional resources for economic development and diversity.

An advisory committee made up of residents from across the state will pick the three pilot areas after a process that includes written proposals and visits.

At the same time the local "great place" effort is starting, another group, The Iowa Creative Corridor Organization, is working to develop a long-term plan to promote the area. The group wants to promote the area in creative and unique ways.

Part of the group's philosophy is that described by author Richard Florida in his book "The Rise of the Creative Class." Areas that have strong workforces of smart, creative people will be able to attract businesses, Florida maintains in the book, a change from the era when areas with a strong business presence attracted the best workers. The group is leading an effort that will bring Florida to the area on Oct. 11.

"Richard Florida can come, but we actually have to have a plan, we need to do something after he comes," said Tom Cilek, one of the founders of the group and honorary chairman.

Cilek is right. The real answer to the question "What could make more sense than designating the North Corridor a 'great place'?" is to keep it great.

## The issue:

■ A group of residents is working to have our area recognized as a "great place." Another is developing a long-term plan to promote the area in creative and unique ways.

## We suggest

■ We applaud these groups' efforts. Keeping our area a great place means we have to focus and build on our strengths and all work together.

## What do you think?

■ What are the best ways for our area to build on our strengths?

■ Send comments to Opinion Page, P.O. Box 2480, Iowa City, Iowa 52245 or e-mail to [opinion@press-citizen.com](mailto:opinion@press-citizen.com).

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That means we have to do something. That means focusing the time and resources of both grassroots and governmental groups. That means putting our money where our mouths are when it comes to keeping the area's arts and cultural scene strong. That means promoting and building on our strengths, including our highly educated workforce.

Doing that is not necessarily an easy task in these times of tight government funding. It requires making tough decisions to keep the strong identity we've established and build on it. It also requires working together.

Kudos to these two groups for their work. Now let's all roll up our sleeves.

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